

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 EA-11 ISO-00 IO-14 EURE-00 AEC-11

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USIA-15 SAJ-01 ACDA-19 OMB-01 DRC-01 /174 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9803

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY SUVA

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

AMCONSUL BORDEAUX

AMCONSUL LYON

AMCONSUL MARSEILLE

AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE

AMCONSUL NICE

AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 14061

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, FR

SUBJECT: DISMISSAL OF SERVAN-SCHREIBER

1. SUMMARY. DISMISSAL OF MINISTER OF REFORMS JEAN-JACQUES SERVAN-SCHREIBER JUNE 9, FOLLOWING HIS PUBLIC CRITICISM OF GOF POLICY OF CONTINUING NUCLEAR TESTS, IS TEMPORARY EMBARRASSMENT FOR GISCARD'S NEW GOVERNMENT BUT IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MAJOR LASTING CONSEQUENCES. END SUMMARY.

2. JUNE 8 ELYSEE ANNOUNCEMENT THAT ATMOSPHERIC NUCLEAR TESTS WILL RESUME IN PACIFIC THIS SUMMER PROVOKED
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SERVAN-SCHREIBER (JJSS) TO PUBLIC CRITICISM OF GOF

POLICY, AND THUS CAUSED FIRST SERIOUS INTERNAL POLITICAL PROBLEM FOR GISCARD'S TWO-WEEK OLD GOVERNMENT. JJSS' STATEMENTS AT PRESS CONFERENCE JUNE 9 IN NANCY WERE OBVIOUSLY UNACCEPTABLE TO BOTH ELYSEE AND MATIGNON, SINCE THEY BROKE MINISTERIAL SOLIDARITY, CHALLENGED GOF ON A FUNDAMENTAL POLICY ISSUE, AND INDIRECTLY CRITICIZED BOTH CHIEF OF STATE AND CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT. GISCARD AND CHIRAC HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO MOVE QUICKLY TO FIRE JJSS, THUS ASSERTING THEIR AUTHORITY OVER THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY FURTHER DISUNITY.

3. GISCARD CLEARLY REAFFIRMED DURING PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN -- AS DID CHIRAC IN JUNE 5 GOVERNMENT POLICY STATEMENT TO ASSEMBLY -- THAT FRANCE WOULD CONTINUE TO DEVELOP ITS NUCLEAR FORCE. JJSS COULD NOT HAVE BEEN SURPRISED BY GISCARD'S DECISION TO RESUME ATMOSPHERIC NUCLEAR TESTS. THIS RAISES QUESTION OF WHY JJSS ACCEPTED A MINISTRY IN FIRST PLACE, GIVEN HIS PAST PUBLIC ATTACKS ON FRENCH TESTING POLICY. FIGARO JUNE 10 SUGGESTS IN THIS REGARD THAT ENTIRE AFFAIR MAY HAVE BEEN CALCULATED PLAN ON JJSS' PART.

4. EPISODE BOTH DELIGHTS AND REASSURES GAULLISTS WHO WERE ANNOYED AT JJSS' APPOINTMENT. UDR SECRETARY-GENERAL SANGUINETTI SUMMED UP GAULLIST FEELINGS IN COMMENTING THAT HE ALWAYS CONSIDERED JJSS "IRRESPONSIBLE".

5. WHILE GISCARD'S IMAGE OF REFORM IS A SHADE TARNISHED, AS IS HIS JUDGMENT IN ORIGINALLY SELECTING JJSS, WE SEE NO INDICATION THAT EPISODE WILL HAVE MAJOR LASTING CONSEQUENCES. NOR WILL IT LIKELY PROVOKE ANY SIGNIFICANT REACTION FROM OTHER REFORMERS IN GOVERNMENT, SOME OF WHOM -- ESPECIALLY JUSTICE MINISTER LECANUET -- WERE UNHAPPY ABOUT JJSS' APPOINTMENT AND ARE UNDOUBTEDLY GLAD TO SEE HIM GO. JJSS' SUPPORTERS CAN TAKE COMFORT IN FACT THAT THEIR MAN HAS DEMONSTRATED THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS. BUT AFFAIR WILL NOT ALTER GOF NUCLEAR TESTING POLICY, AND JJSS' FUTURE POLITICAL INFLUENCE -- SMALL AT BEST -- BECOMES EVEN MORE DOUBTFUL.

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